



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10**

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OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

September 20, 2010

Jerrold D. Gregg, Area Manager
Bureau of Reclamation, Snake River Area Office
230 Collins Road
Boise, Idaho 83702-4520

Re: EPA Region 10 Review of the Minidoka Dam Spillway Replacement Project FEIS
EPA Project Number: 08-063-DOI

Dear Mr. Gregg:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Minidoka Dam Spillway Replacement Project (CEQ Number 20100324) in Minidoka County, Idaho. Our review of the FEIS was conducted in accordance with our responsibilities under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The FEIS identifies Alternative B (Spillway and Headworks Replacement) as the preferred alternative. This alternative would correct structural problems at the Minidoka Dam through the construction of a new spillway (overflow and radial gate sections); dike; and headworks on the north and south side canals. In addition, Alternative B proposes to implement public use improvements and to designate special use areas.

In our comments on the draft EIS, EPA recognized the importance of the Minidoka Dam in southern Idaho, and the need to prevent structural failure of the spillway and canal headworks. We also identified a range of concerns related to the analysis of water quality impacts, the potential extent of jurisdictional wetlands, and the extent to which the wetlands below the dam would be monitored and adaptively managed. We appreciate the modifications incorporated into Alternative B, and the additional detail included in the FEIS to address these concerns.

With regard to the wetland complex below the dam, we are pleased to note the effort undertaken by the Bureau of Reclamation to work with the Corps to identify wetland extent and appropriate mitigation. We also appreciate your invitation to participate on the Technical Team that will establish monitoring protocols and impact thresholds. We recommend that you direct that invitation to Mr. Michael Szerlog, Manager of the Aquatic Resources Unit at szerlog.michael@epa.gov or 206-553-0279. He will assign staff support to the Technical Team as appropriate, and as resources allow.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the final EIS. I encourage you to contact Teresa Kubo of my staff, with any questions at (503) 326-2859 or by email at kubo.teresa@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
Environmental Review and Sediment Management Unit